

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1111

UNCLAS MEXICO 10675

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: AMODE, AFSP, APER
SUBJECT: AMERICAN POSITION REDUCTION

REF: STATE 161876

1. I WAS SURPRISED BY THE NOTIFICATION IN REFTEL THAT MEXICO IS LOSING 6 PROGRAM POSITIONS BASED ON THE NECESSITY TO STAFF HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAMS IN ARA. IF ARA BELIEVES THAT MEXICO'S STAFF MUST BE CUT BY 6 POSITIONS, I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT THE EMBASSY WAS NOT INVITED TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION AS TO WHICH POSITIONS COULD MOST EASILY BE ELIMINATED WITHOUT CAUSING SERIOUS HARM TO OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. WE ARE ESPECIALLY PERPLEXED THAT DECISIONS WERE SEEMINGLY MADE WITHOUT REGARD TO PRIOR STAFFING STUDIES INCLUDING THE GORM EXERCISE.

2. I FIND IT ESPECIALLY HARD TO UNDERSTAND THE ABOLITION OF TWO SECRETARIAL POSITIONS IN MEXICO CITY. TO SERVICE 68 AMERICAN OFFICERS, WE HAVE 17 SECRETARIES (INCLUDING THE NARCOTICS ADVISORY UNIT): A RATIO OF 4 OFFICERS TO 1 SECRETARY. THE POLITICAL SECTION HAS 5 OFFICERS AND 3 SECRETARIES. WHEN ONE OF THE SECRETARIES IS ABSENT WHICH HAPPENS FREQUENTLY DUE TO SICK LEAVE, ANNUAL LEAVE
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AND HOME LEAVE, FOR 124 WORK DAYS OF THE YEAR THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE SECRETARY IN THE POLITICAL SECTION.

3. I AM NOT CONVINCED THAT REDUCING SECRETARIAL CAPABILITIES IS THE BEST APPROACH TO RESOLVING STAFFING PROBLEMS. SINCE WE HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF OFFICERS, THE BUREAU'S ACTION WILL REDUCE OUR SECRETARIAL SUPPORT BY 13 PERCENT.

OUR WORKLOAD IN THE EMBASSY IS NOT DECREASING, AND THE PERCENT WILL HAVE TO BE MADE UP BY INCREASED OVERTIME AND WORK DONE ON NON-PERSONAL SERVICES CONTRACT.

4. I FIND PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME THE PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF A POSITION IN OUR POLITICAL SECTION. THE POLITICAL SECTION PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE SUBSTANTIVE REPORTING AND POLICY ANALYSIS OF AN EFFECTIVE EMBASSY, AND FURTHER CUTS WOULD ALMOST INEVITABLY HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE VOLUME AND TIMELINESS OF THE EMBASSY'S REPORTING. MISS MCFALL'S POSITION IS ALSO ESSENTIAL FOR THE EFFICIENT, INTERNAL OPERATION OF THE POLITICAL SECTION. WITHOUT HER, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR'S SECRETARY WOULD HAVE TO ASSIST THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER AND THE ROTATIONAL OFFICER, AN UNACCEPTABLE SITUATION FOR THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR. IN THE CASE OF LEAVE (ANNUAL, HOME OR SICK), THE REMAINING SECRETARY CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO WORK EFFICIENTLY FOR FIVE OFFICERS AT THE SAME TIME. WE ALSO MAKE USE OF A SECRETARY FROM THE POLITICAL SECTION TO STAFF MY OFFICE WHEN ONE OF THE FRONT-OFFICE SECRETARIES IS ABSENT; THE LOSS OF THIS POSITION REMOVES THIS FLEXIBILITY IN KEEPING MY OFFICE STAFFED. IN ADDITION WE ASK THE POLITICAL SECTION TO GIVE SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE TO VISITING VIPS.

5. I AM PREPARED TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS AND GIVE UP THE 4 UNCLASSIFIED

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POSITIONS AT THE CONSTITUENT POSTS, PLUS THE ONE SECRETARIAL POSITION IN THE ECONOMIC SECTION, BUT FEEL STRONGLY THAT WE WILL BE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED IF WE ARE REQUIRED TO REDUCE OUR SECRETARIAL STAFF AT THE EMBASSY BY TWO POSITIONS. I, THEREFORE, REQUEST THAT THE SECRETARIAL POSITION IN THE POLITICAL SECTION BE RESTORED, AND THAT MISS MCFALL REMAIN IN THIS POSITION FOR THE REST OF HER TOUR. LUCEY

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